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ECHANGE

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P O L A N D

Solidarnosc: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers (Spartacist Publishing Co - Box 1377 - GPO - New York - NY 10116 - USA - in English)

This pamphlet was issued in October 1981 by the US trotskyst group 'Spartacist League'. Reading it is somewhat difficult: we have to remove the constant heavy polemics of this semi-stalinist sect with other trotskysts and to understand the rather esoteric language it carries. Anyway, we can find some interest in a lot of facts, and arguments dealing with the attempt of western capitalism - mainly US - to move into Poland in the wake of the workers' movement, using for this purpose the Catholic Church and Solidarity union.

This hard leninist group doesn't say much about the rank and file movement - of course - only to state it needs leninism to go ahead. So the pamphlet deals only with political matters, seeing workers as a kind of herd to be tamed and used by disputant political powers - the bad ones and the good ones. We could consider the assertion that 'Poland was locked in a deepening crisis heading towards explosion which could bring either proletarian political revolution against the stalinist bureaucracy or capitalist counter revolution led by Pope Wojtyla's church'.

If we consider what happened in Hungary in 1956, we can see clearly that nothing is neither so clear-cut nor so accurate. The text doesn't refer at all to two main points:

- the sharing of the world after the second world war between the two super-powers: till now, there has been no direct attempt to interfere seriously the hunting grounds of the other.
- any revolutionary explosion from the workers will be crushed by the repression force of the dominant super-powers, with the support (direct

or indirect) eventually of the other super-power. The reason is that such an explosion does not recognize boundaries and is as dangerous for the other super-power.

It is an illusion to believe that the intervention of this other super-power could help eventually the workers to get more freedom and to go ahead towards a society of their own. The text - though it is not at all it's purpose gives element to understand how the american and church intervention in Poland in 1981-1982 aimed at building an alternative line of repression. It is not yet certain even now that this alternative line will not come to life after the period of direct repression.

Conversations with the Polish underground - Franck Michalski (from Across Frontiers - US review) Copy at Echanges.

This report of meetings with opposition activists during the winter '85 gives much about the actual situation of the present class struggle and economic developments in Poland. It is as well somewhat distorted by the author's 'libertarian socialist tradition' and the fact that he 'wanted to talk about peace and nuclear disarmament'. We can nevertheless get some interesting view from such present and former leaders or admirers of Solidarity. On the question of class struggle that interests us, F.M. had as well a very narrow approach when giving at first his own point of view on Polish workers: 'How can a workers' movement for socialist objectives such as workers' control of the economy and democratic and social institutions be so nationalistic and so loyal to the Catholic Church?'. The difference between this ideological approach and our own one could not be better formulated by the question we would have asked instead: 'How can a workers' movement so nationalistic and so loyal to the Catholic Church be so clear-cut on class struggle and self-organization for their own interests?'. Of course, the author doesn't ask this question but inadvertently gives some elements of answer. Though he asks the other question, he does not actually answer it either.

Some occasional declarations from 'well-informed insiders' allow to measure the gap between the rank and file workers on one side, the underground political opposition and 'Solidarity's organizational structure' on the other side. 'How rank and file miners felt could not be inferred from the attitudes of union leaders in hiding'. This gap is even seen more clearly from the discussion with K. (Kuron apparently), working, as he said, to 'help find a way out of our present stalemate'. 'The self-management issue is a good example of the inadequacy of the overall approach.. It has become a rallying cry for workers and intellectuals alike .. it divides the world into the believers - who form a community with a self-identity so clear that no specific rational discussion of the identity is necessary or desirable - and 'the others' who are corrupt, mendacious and therefore can never be partners to a real world compromise'. Arguing about this clear statement, K.

feigns to believe that workers' ideas of self-management are bureaucratic ones, discussing them as 'hardly in their own interest' (of the workers of course). It is not that interesting to mention that K. is looking for 'a new form of property relations .. a form of ownership which gives workers a concrete share in the enterprise and in the economy .. China may provide a clue here ..'. Nothing to add.

FRANCE

L'Exagéré (7 rue J.F. Gerbillon - 75006 Paris) Nr. 1/ Mai 1987 (in French): very literary - speculators are dreamers-

doing things while laughing - On the SNCF strike.

L'Aube Internationaliste - June '87 (Librairie l'Herbe Rouge: 1 bis rue d'Alesia - 75014 Paris - in French). Some thoughts on the social situation in France - Individualization of wages - On the SMIG - Again the strikes all around the world - Workers savings help capital - Communism and abolition of the wage system.

L'Anarcho-syndicalist (BP 132 F. - 44802. Paper of the anarcho-syndicalist union). Nr 58/April 87: Teachers, a real fight? - Vendée under the French Revolution - The strikes during the winter '86-'87.

L'Intersyndicaliste (G.S.E.D. - 11 rue St. Vincent de Paul - 13004 Marseille - France). Nr. 22/ May-June '87 (in French) - Pythagoras was a liar.

Noir et Rouge (chez Félix, 65 rue Bichat - 75010 Paris).

Nr 4/March-April '87: Railway workers, the rise of the social movement - 'La force tranquille' (Alain Bik's review of this book on the social democracy in France) - Study on the reactionary movements in France: on the extreme right: what is a nation? - Old ideas - The politics of the Catholic Church - The libertarian thought opposed to the extreme right ideologies - Who is behind Le Pen? - Who is copying the National Front: RPF and FN. Nr 5/June-July '87: USSR and Pologne: moving in the same situation - USSR: wages, prices and profits (class analysis of the Soviet Union) - The agricultural reform - The new ideological offensive - Who are the soviet dissenters? - Poland: a chronicle of daily life - The underground publications since the military coup (December '81).

Anti-semitism and the Beyrouth pogrom - Freddy Perlman, (Critique du monde - L'Insécurité Sociale - BP 243 - Paris Cedex 12 - France - in French), translation in a pamphlet of an article published in Fifth Estate - vol 17-Fall '82. Postface by Lorraine Perlman and explanatory notes (two good pages on the political contortions of J.P. Sartre)

Cash (ACP 53 Avenue des Gobelins - 75013 Paris - in French. A paper for the unemployed and precarious workers). Nr. 5/January '87: Autumn movement (students) - On the invisible women work - Back to the moral order - Abstract work, concrete wage - Guaranteed income.

Nr. 6/April '87: Unemployed speaks out - Notes from the country - Abstract work, concrete wage - Italy: unemployment; Naples - The new forms of the labour market in Italy.

C'Est Possible (127 rue Marcadet - 75108 Paris - in French) Nr. 0: This new bulletin presents itself as follows: 'Our departure was a solidarity committee of railway workers and customers which was built during the railways strike. This issue contains information on struggles in the banks, the railways, the secondary school attendants and a call for direct contact between workers'.

In the wake of every big strike, we can see the building up of such organizations which try to 'go ahead with the struggle'. A lot of activity can be devoted to such a task and the result is always the same: a failure. Not by chance. What a struggle has developed can't be maintained artificially once the struggle is over.

Mais encore (The paper of Paris-Nord - in French) Nr. 1/April '87: published by railway workers of Paris-Nord station who were very active in the December-January strikes and who wish to keep what was got during these strikes so that future strikes could benefit of it.

Contents: short story of the drivers' strike at Paris-Nord - The strike of booking offices - The drivers' coordination - Solidarity during the strike.

Courant Alternatif (OCL/Eggregore - BP 1213 - 51058 Cedex - Reims)

Nr. 64/March '87: Longwy: stopping the blast furnaces .. which strike-Knobelspiess or the judiciary persecution - Nuclear power station: everything is planned but .. the freezing cold - Japan: unclear power stations-Ecological problems in Eastern countries - SNCF strike - Kazakstan: Kazaks against Gorbachev - Nicaragua: some impressions.

Interrogation pour la communauté humaine (c/o IS - BP 243 - 75566 Paris Cedex 12) List of available publications in French.

Les Cahiers du Doute (Thiriou - BP 117 - 75961 Paris Cedex 20 - in French) Nr 1/May '87. The first issue of this new publication is devoted only to the movements of struggles in France during the winter '86-'87. A review will follow in the next Echanges issue.

Les mauvais jours finiront (= Nr. 3/87 of L'Herbe Rouge - 1 bis rue d'Alesia, 75014 Paris - in French) This pamphlet is supposed to be a history and

an analysis of the student movement in November/December '86 in France; it is more: a lot of personal remarks on this movement in a sometimes poetical, sometimes pompous language. This lyricism hides definite judgments; the whole lot is mixed in a peculiar and seducing logic to link a lot of facts which could have been assembled just as well in another jig-saw. The text is very pleasant to read but we don't know what to think of the voluntarism backing these judgments. We can read for instance in the last paragraph of the text:

In the coming month and years, everything will depend on the appearance of passionate souls who would find only the positive overthrow of the present world as a task up to their ambitions .. If the collective movement stopped its development in a near future .. the quiet demoralization .. will come again to dominate the whole society and the management problems would find a solution in an enlargement and spreading of unhappiness'.

Apparently the author ignores totally the balance of struggle which weaves the day-to-day content of class struggle in capitalist society.

USA

A. Distribution (USA) (396 Seventh Street, Apt. 2, Jersey City, NJ 07 302 - USA) A catalogue of publications in English.

CANADA

Open Road (Box 6135 - Station G - Vancouver - BC - Canada V4 R4 G5 - in English)

Nr. 21/Spring 87: Articles on riots in London, Amsterdam, Hamburg; Nicaragua - a native Indians, the revolution continues.

General remarks on the question of organisation

A reprint in French of Pannekoek's text published in Living Marxism - IV-5/11/38, with the signature of J. Harper. Copy at Echanges

Rosa Luxemburg

A biographical leaflet issued for the recent film on Rosa (in French) - La Sociale - 116 est - rue Mont Royal - Montreal.

UNITED KINGDOM

Rebel violence versus hierarchical violence
- A chronology of anti-state violence on the UK-mainland, July 1985-May 1986. BM Combustion, London WC 1N 3XX.

'What happened in Handsworth, Brixton, Tottenham and in the mining areas the year before was so vast that there was no way the media

could ignore it.. What received a lot less publicity were the scores of smaller revolts that have happened around the country (in addition to the riots that took place in Holland - not reported -, West Germany, Greece, the prisons of France - hardly reported -, Tokyo - hardly reported -, mini-riots in Berkeley USA - not reported -, Guadeloupe, Uganda, The Philippines, Haïti and, of course, the revolutionary uprisings in South-Africa - not to mention probably innumerable other places)'.

This mixture of such events called 'riots' all over the world, don't deserve the slightest attempt of an analysis to sort out how much they differ and what they could have actually in common. This pamphlet is no more explicit on this detailed chronology of violence in UK (and in some other countries as well): it labels as 'smaller revolts' and sometimes as 'the most beautiful event of the year in this country', as 'mini-riots', sometimes 'near-riots', a wide range of events: miners struggles inside and outside the mines after their long strike; the permanent violence in Toxteth (depressed Liverpool area); the everlasting guerilla of the print workers against the use of new technology to remove the rank and file power in print shops (not only in Wapping but in a lot of other places too); complex violence at the Notting Hill carnival in 1985; the riots in Handsworth (Birmingham); in Brixton (South London), when the cops shot and crippled a black woman in her home; in Tottenham (North London) after another black woman had a fatal heart attack when pushed by cops inside her home and left dying without help; all kinds of clashes with cops involving soccer fans' or local teenagers; prison riots on the 30/4/86 all over England; victorious resistance of squatters on the Pullen Estate (South London); any daily reaction to the daily aggression of cops or the reverse: any daily aggression to the cops answering their attempt to bring 'law & order', etc...

Some events deserve a commentary, some others have to be linked to the political background, some comment answer to previous criticism of 'some people', some advice is given to workers or rioters: 'Liverpool workers haven't broken free from all these cliques claiming to represent them, at least with any sufficient clarity'. 'Their is a realistic possibility - mere so than an immediate over-lap with the sadly as yet more bureaucratic forms of the employed workers' struggle', some hope that 'a class strike were to rip through the city, making possible linkups with the riotous youth..'.

Such a collection of facts with casual remarks makes a big pamphlet but we expect more from a pamphlet. As most of the information given is borrowed from the 'bourgeois press', the author can assert at the very beginning that 'as far as is known, all the facts here are completely accurate', adding immediately that 'perhaps there are some unintentional inaccuracies': everybody knows that the media either ignore facts or give them far more importance, or distort them, according to the political interest (i.e. peculiar interest of the present government presented as the general state interest)

As says the author, information is either ignored or smothered in ideology, half-truth or lies instead. We have to cope with that, so, it is not through this linear and somewhat fastidious cocktail of facts that we can get some better view of class struggle in England.

'Of course, revolt .. needs an explanation'; we can't agree with such a declaration even if we can follow another statement on 'the present resurgence of class struggle'. Both are mere statements without any attempt, not to explain or understand but to analyze. This lack of a real analysis of the present class struggle in England is the weakness of this text, even if we think it is worth reading it, bringing the materials for such an analysis. This lack of analysis has to be opposed to some moral judgments. Indeed these judgments hide an idealistic underground analysis of what they called 'anti-hierarchical violence', presented as the link between all these facts. 'Unfortunately, proletarians .. were also sometimes attacked.. Insurgents .. sometimes turned to indiscriminate smuggling .. some incidents were rubbish.. '. Elsewhere the author underlines 'the ambiguity of their situation..'. There is some explanation that could have been more developed, e.g. the gentrification of London or such a statement: 'Beneath the bleakness up North, there's a constant spontaneous class solidarity which, despite a lot of bullshit about 'community' really does develop into a community of struggle sometimes'.

Such developments could have helped to understand the role of the left or of the unions in all these direct or exploited forms of class struggle, e.g. why the left tendency of Labour, the trotskyst militant, managed to conquer the Town Hall of Liverpool; they were the only one still available to bring illusion and mystification. This short-lived experiment was an effective one for a time; it could be compared with the rising of Mac Gahey or Scargill in the NUM. Manipulation is not the work of manipulators: it requires a situation where the manipulators can pretend to express the movement of the rank and file until it is evident they don't at all.

What could appear after reading this text is the more general link between all those facts, though not expressed directly like that: the present misery of an important part of the British proletariat. The boundaries between the different strata of this proletariat are difficult to draw: any worker can jump up or down at any moment into the different degrees of poverty. It is only a matter of chance in the lottery of race, unemployment, dequalification, sickness, age, etc. We can agree with this extract:

'The UK is entering a period of great commotion with no easy tide over the rapids. The atmosphere out there is extremely tense. In daily life there's an allowed sharpening aggro - and individuals are snapping with each other everywhere with hidden aggressions and contradictions exploding on many levels..'. 'Breakdown, schizophrenia, madness are on the loose everywhere..'.

On the contrary, we don't agree with the other part of this extract:

'The proletariat .. is divided because it is weak. Those at the heart of all this shit - the only ones able to change it - respond in different ways.. The search for subversive unity is extremely complex .. link up between the unemployed and employed which will one day be made..'

Can we understand from these words that the author considers class struggle as a frontal attack against the capitalist order? (the title of the pamphlet could corroborate this idea) An army is on the way divided at present into small groups working separately: all these forces have to join for the final assault.

Such a vision of the British reality and of class struggle in general privileges one present aspect of the struggle. It is actually only a small part of it and what can appear as its immediate aims perhaps belong to the past rather than to the future. Other aspects of the present struggle are intentionally let aside: the transformation of mentalities, unification of attitudes, constant communication and a very different 'organization' of what means traditionally this word. Most of these other aspects can only be measured from an ever-growing repression. This repression can only oppose its traditional forms and then gives a wrong characterization to the phenomena it tries to fight and stop. The proletariat is united by the general conditions imposed by the capital.

All the described events are the expression of a strength not of a weakness. It is not the will of a group or of some social category which will unify all these separated struggles but only the fact that one of these struggles will have to express itself at a more general level owing to the circumstances and level of the repression, answering to the threat of the global movement for the existence of the capitalist system.

SOUTH - AFRICA

The Miners Strike In South Africa And The Struggle Against 'Apartheid' (Act and Thought, Holland, Oct. '87)

Not so long ago, commenting upon what happened in South Africa, we predicted that 'apartheid' would be far more seriously menaced if the struggle against racism would become part of the social struggle in this country. Recently, this prediction got a strong support by the strike of the S. African miners.

The government in Pretoria seems to believe in its ability to suppress an eruption of the social volcano by the violence of the police and the army. The 'progressive' part of the ruling class knows better. They make contacts with the ANC, well aware that in a not so distant future 'apartheid' will come to an end. Late August, just after the miners strike, a well informed reporter noted: 'Inside the ANC, but also inside the trade unions or inside regional political movements, gradually a new generation of black leaders

has lined up. Mostly they are intelligent people, who studied abroad and who try to judge the situation and the possibilities coolly and from a distance. White South Africans, who recently in Dakar made contacts with the ANC, without exception were deeply impressed by the way their opponents emotionless looked at the future of the country. However, the leaders of the ANC wondered greatly whether they could control any longer the black youth in S. Africa or not and prevent them from proceeding to terrorism'. Apart from the typical middle-class prejudice that graduates, in contradistinction to the stupid and temperamental mob, are intelligent and cool observers, this seems to be a true statement.

To avert the obvious dangers, the S. African ruling class attempts to create a black middle-class. But it is too late for such a remedy and in S. Africa this is realized as well. The situation can be characterized by the word stalemate. On the one side the possibilities for a protest mostly felt off, on the other hand the opportunities to integrate the black population in the existing order also disappeared. In all probability, the stalemate will be replaced by the struggle of the working class. In recent years the number of strikes has strongly increased. According to the *South African Labour Bulletin*, an independent professional paper, this trend started with a strike at the Ford factory in 1979. The number of strikes increased from 21,000 in 1979 to a matter of 170,000 last year. Last May there were work-stops around Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, where the most important motorcar factories are domiciliated. At Fords 1,400 workers were on strike, at Leylands 1,900 and at General Motors' 200.

This year at least 18 big strikes took place, with 100,000 workers involved, employed by different branches of industry. The *Labour Bulletin* contributes the rise of the number of strikes to the economic and political crisis in S. Africa. 'On the economic level the strikes are in response to the low incomes of the blacks. From a political point of view they can be understood a part of the tendency towards a defamation of the status quo. This happens not only in the factories, but also in the schools and in the black townships. (...) The black workers won't put up any longer with the crumbs of a prospering economy; they want a legitimate part of the prosperity they create'.

An allied phenomenon is the following: since last January the central organization of employers recommends industries to negotiate with the trade unions in case of a strike, even if these trade unions are not officially recognized, being this preferable to an immediate discharge of the workforce, because this more and more often was causing violent battles with the police. In this manner employers try to lead the social conflicts into channels which can be kept under control. The central organization of employers says: 'With regard to the labour situation the country is in a transitional stage and hitherto employers and trade unions couldn't reach agreement on negotiation rules. Instead of pressing on a system from above, we should

develop a system from the basis. This can only be effectuated if all trade unions are drawn into the deliberation'.

The management of the mines took a similar stand during the strike in August this year, though this was not clearly visible at the time. However, what Bobby Godsell - the official spokesman of Anglo-American, the biggest mining company - was saying, was beyond any doubt: 'This test (i.e. the strike) we experience now has to free the way for a framework by which the white business community and the black workers can share power. In this strike we don't want to destroy the union. What matters is to find a type of negotiation - in which strikes are implicated of course - which enables us to go on with'.

Godsell is a representative of a progressive current inside of the ruling class, working already for the period to come after the 'apartheid'. He believes that it will be a South African employer's duty to permit his workforce to join a trade union and to admit that in a racial climate like the one in South Africa, such trade unions can take a political hostile attitude. Nevertheless, this doesn't mean that employers should always submit to unions. 'Our position in this strike for wage-demands of the NUM is clear enough in connection with us. The workers will not get more by the simple method of a strike. We negotiate seriously and we want to be dealt with seriousness by our opponents as well', Godsell declared. He did so at the end of a strike in which especially Anglo-American adopted rigorous measures against the workers. This however doesn't contradict his just quoted words, because the employers didn't take action against the NUM but against the miners.

Last March the NUM asked for a wage rise of 55%, which was rejected by the companies. Dating from July 1th, the companies on their own hook increased wages with 15 to 23%. The union didn't accept this and asked for another 30%. Further demands were: the same benefit for dangerous work as was paid to white miners; 30 days of holidays; free on Friday June 16th, the anniversary of the insurrection in Soweto, but without loss of wage. In connection with this, one shouldn't forget that white miners earn five times as much as the blacks and that their functions are far less dirty or dangerous.

On Monday August 10th about 300,000 black miners, spread over all the mining districts in S. Africa, went on strike. The NUM asked them to leave the territory of the mines and to go home. This, to prevent them from being starved out by the companies and because there was a fear for violence from the side of the police or security troops. When after a few days workers noticed that the security troops remained at a distance and also that the kitchens of the mines continued to distribute food, many of them didn't go home. Others turned home, especially from those mines where there was a lot of violence. Because there was violence and intimidation right from the beginning. For instance, there was a goldmine where the workers, rifles in their backs, had been forced to reenter the mine. However, underground the started immediate-

ly a sit-down strike.

When the strike was one week old, the NUM was invited to discuss the matter of increasing violence on Monday, August 17th. During the deliberation the companies declared, that the barracks of the workers would remain 'normally accessible' to workers, managers and trade union officials. On the other hand, neither the union nor the workers themselves should use any violence against scabs. Nevertheless, in the first week of the strike security troops of the mines entered many times the barracks of the workers with much display of power. It's well known that many workers are living there, whilst their wives and children are living far away in an infertile part of S. Africa which is called 'a homeland', or even in another country like Mozambique for instance.

At a time that the deliberations still went on, on Tuesday, August 18th, the police used violence again, shooting and handling whips at a mine in Oranje Vrijstaat. The NUM then left the talks.

Another method of pressure from the side of the companies was the menace that strikers would be dismissed. This was effectuated too. Anglo on Thursday, August 20th, closed the pit of the goldmine Vaal Reefs and dismissed 2,000 workers. In the second week of the strike more workers had been dismissed. On Friday, August 21th, Anglo-American dismissed once more 4,000 workers. According to the NUM 10,000 strikers had lost their jobs at that moment. Anglo-American announced the dismissal of further 44,000 workers, if they shouldn't have returned to work on Monday 24th.

In the third week of the strike the employers invited the NUM once more to talks. Anglo-American said, it wanted to show its 'good wish' by extending the time of the dismissal of the 44,000 with one day. During these talks the wage demands were scarcely discussed, because the managers refused to do so. Subject of the talks were an extra allowance for holidays and a payment in case of death by accident. Both would increase. The union lowered the wage demand to 27%. Next day the NUM's president declared that the workers unanimously had rejected these proposals and wanted to continue the strike.

The mining federation was very disappointed and declared, that 'the NUM obviously had not been able to convince the membership that the offer of the Mining Chamber should be accepted.' The NUM didn't give any advice whether the offer should be accepted or not, because the union leadership was internally divided. The next day the employers dismissed large numbers of miners. Totally 50,000 strikers found themselves out of a job.

Fearing further measures of the employers and especially fearing even more dismissals, the NUM on Sunday, August 30th, accepted an offer of the mining management, which was more unfavorable than the offer of last Tuesday. A pay-rise of 23,4% had been agreed, the allowance for holidays and the payment in case of death by accident would rise likewise but less than had been proposed during the talks.

Directly after the strike people argued on the question whether the miners

had lost or not. Mr Steenkamp, the president of the S. African Mining Chamber, said, that he hoped that in the future there would be more realism on both sides. The employers had learned that the trade union movement was powerful and had organizational abilities and firmness. On the other hand, Steenkamp continued, the union movement had learned, that employers can be flexible, but also fix their limits and are tenacious of them. Ramaphosa, the NUM's president said: 'They have not won and we have not lost. Our members don't consider this as a defeat.'

As we see it: indeed the miners are not defeated. On the contrary, an important progress has been made in the struggle against 'apartheid', in the struggle for the emancipation of the black workers. One of the most important characteristics of the S. African situation is the resemblance of the economic relations in this country with those in Europe and the USA, though political and social relations are far less developed. In S. Africa, the trade union movement has still an important role in the struggle for political emancipation. In this strike the result was, that workers got a pay-rise of 45%. They realized however that their power was not strong enough to obtain the compliance with all their demands. That's the reason why they accepted the decision of the NUM to repeal the strike.

In Europe or in the USA it hardly occurs that a strike is repealed without protests of the rank and file, because there the trade unions don't have a meaning for the struggle of the workers any longer. For the miners in S. Africa the pay-rise has been the main issue, but one of its consequences has been that the abolition of 'apartheid' has come nearer.

N.V.

USA

Discussion Bulletin (PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids, Mi 49501) No 22/March 8
Review of Buick/Crump: State Capitalism, The Wages System Under New Management - Discussions on de Leonism - Neo-utopianism - Anti-utopianism - The labor theory of value versus labor vouchers - The SLP revisited (cont'd)

No 23/May 87 - Society would be more secure without police, prisons and armies - Report on the national situation (Internationalism, US section of the ICC) - Revolutionary unions, Labor's next move (IWW leaflet) - Imagine a Democratic Socialist Party - Discussions on de Leonism/Socialist Industrial Unionism/IWW, on SLP & Russia and on labor vouchers

No 24/July 87 - The SLP Revisited (conclusion) - A minarchist approach Discussions on de Leonism, on labor vouchers, on SLP & Russia and on Socialist Party of Great Britain.

No 25/September 87 Letter from Internationalism (ICC) - Interrogations: A critique of the theory of decadent capitalism - The dialectic of 'The Scientific Revolution' - Discussions on de Leonism and on labor voucher organisation of socialist society.

BIZARRO PROCESSES WORLD

Captives of Consciousness - The elements of a Processed Worldview
Stephanie Klein - PO Box 7353, Menlo Park, Cal. 94025, USA

Echanges readers know Processed World, an american paper from a small californian group; its content was regularly reported in Echanges but never actually reviewed. We mentioned as well from time to time some polemical texts sent to Echanges by former PW members; the personal rather than political character of these disputes prevented us to understand what was really at stake.

This pamphlet tries to go further and to give us a better understanding of the creation, evolution and working of Processed World. It details, as the joined letter says, the author's experience and eventual departure from the PW collective: 'It tries to go beyond the limitations of an exposé or scandal sheet' (what the above mentioned texts were effectively). Nevertheless the author was not that sure to escape these limitations as she adds: 'My larger purpose .. was to arrive at some insights into the nature of all self styled radical political activity, including my own', an area of investigation that needs 'to be pursued more rigorously .. the starting point of such a pursuit'.

Though the publication of this partly self critical work was delayed for four years we can praise the author for having performed it because anyway it was not an easy way. We can praise her because it is rather rare to see such militants trying to understand the meaning of their own activity, or their involvement in a group and beyond this personal experience to see how a group works. Questioning our own activity - if it is done seriously - means questioning at the same time the relationships inside the group, its relationship to society as a whole, its very existence.

I will add: its relationship to class struggle. 'Any criticism of a project that I was once a part of is necessarily a criticism of my own political activity'. As we have said, this criticism, self criticism, was a bit hard from the very beginning because: 'In a sense, PW has become .. the only arena in which many anti-authoritarians can reaffirm their radicality'. We can understand how it could be difficult to break with what was once a kind of family and a refuge against the disappointment of previous militant activity; PW recognized itself that it 'helps its members survive a bleak time'. The author adds that the question is to see whether it helps its members confront the failure of their 'revolutionary project'; we can answer: no - as far as PW offered a way to escape the real questions about the failure of some kind of militantism, to go ahead with a kind of activity which was not too far from the previous one, offering at the same time a new appearance to old ideas.

We can easily believe that PW 'came out of a grouping of people who had been working on similar activities for years' and as well that it is not certain that 'the commonality that allowed collaboration was a rejection of capitalism and of all forms of authoritarianism'. Perhaps people going to PW believed that, but we guess that more certainly they went there pushed by the desire to 'do something', to go ahead with previous militancy, looking for a new basis for it as the former ones have failed. Certainly most of the PW members shared the idea that people could and would free themselves, developing - though pretending not - self styled vanguardism in some model opposition to modern life, rejection of social norms .. 'We created a sub-culture of our own .., most people, indeed those who would supposedly benefit most from it, dismissed or rejected my opposition to modern life as utopian or dangerous'. This quotation from the author gives the exact position of 'ordinary workers' towards 'militants'. As in any kind of group of people thinking they are right, the group could function in its own circle without questioning its positions and existence. Going into details in the regrouping of different kind of activists, the author can write that 'the newly-held belief in activism per se enabled the milieu to lumber along without having to confront its problems, without having to undertake an analysis of itself'.

This way is the current way of all political activist groups: they try to find a public - the exploited office workers for PW - 'to market a particular point of view', to project an identity with the social category the paper was aimed at. It was unavoidable that in such a close and closed group, the personal relationships or jealousy came to support the repressed, unexpressed unconscious political disagreements: friendship or aversion, love and hate are often the mask of hidden frustrations and underground divergences. When the author writes: 'I had a commitment to a more general approach to politics', it sums up how small political disagreements could pile up to the point of rupture, not enough important when isolated to give a reason to break, enough to widen the gap with others' conceptions.

Some, perfectly aware of this situation, wanted to maintain the paper - and then the group - because it was as well 'their life'. From the moment they could detect a threat for their child any pretext was good enough to push the 'heretics' out of the group in a subtle and somewhat dirty way, in such a manner not to have the real problems coming openly in discussion. What the author describes very well is more or less what we could have found in any kind of group.

When she says that she has tried to open up the question of both 'professional and para-professional revolutionaries', or the other question that 'theory must be able to withstand a confrontation with itself', she asks

herself and ourselves the real questions. But she answers them in the text only indirectly; we can understand that others in PW have refused to answer them, certainly for various reasons.

In the last paragraph of the pamphlet, the author underlines that 'the world still needs changing, making a lucid interpretation of it, and our roles in it, all the more necessary'. We are not that certain that she has gone to the end of the actual meaning of her experience in PW, more or less stuck in the difficulty to get out of what was a deep part of her personal life in her participation and relationships in PW. This pushed on the side the problem of the relations of the group with workers and class struggle though we can clearly see from what the author tells us, that the main questions raised up when she was sacked from her job. Telling that, we can only encourage her, as she proposed herself, to go ahead with her analysis of any kind of militant political activity.

ITALIE

COLLEGAMENTI NOBELY

Collegamenti Wobbly No. 18, Autumn-Winter 1986

The Stock Exchange or your Life - An article on recent developments in the stock market in Italy. The changes in the law allowing the launching of unit trusts for the masses (or those with money), the slowing of inflation and the taxing of government bonds which began to affect savers, continuous messing about with the housing market which made real estate development less attractive and lastly, but not least the much improved performance of Italian industry with FIAT at its head have led to an impressive increase in the value (and quantity) of stocks on the Italian stock exchanges. The exchange, however, is still small fry compared with the international exchanges and, if one takes into account changes in the City, well behind in organizational terms. The article stresses the divergence between this reality and the image capitalism wishes to provide of itself - the 'people' can now invest in industry and do well. As ever, as the article concludes: one does not become wealthy by working, which is also one of the main weaknesses of Italian capitalism, still based on protectionism, rather than competition.

The unemployed without a movement and the movement of the market - An article on the fall in employment in the large industries, the inability of the state (financially) to continue further with creating new jobs, the growing gap between North and South and the introduction of foreign immigrant labour in more menial jobs: all these have blocked the development of unemployed movements (plus those of movements of those seeking a regular work contract) which sought links with the (now almost non-existent) workers' struggles, or at least a chink in the state's system which gave some prospect of work. Some struggles still take place - in mid June hospital workers in Rome clashed with the police over the question of overtime and the need to take on more staff. On the move - On evictions and counter-occupations in Milan. Since the (temporary) end to the anti-eviction law, many people have been put out on the street, with consequent and repeated attempts to overcome the problem.

Panzieri, a paradigm to be proved - On Panzieri and Quaderni Rossi etc.
 Spanish Ports and Dockers' Struggles - The same article has appeared in Echanges. The supplement - A short history of the Coordinadora - has not.
 News on strike - On the News Corporation - Printers dispute.
 Processed Word: An Interview - The Californian 'computer magazine' explains its struggle.
 South Africa: the Laboratory of Repression

U K

Non-Market Socialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

Ed. by Maximilien Rubel and John Crump. Macmillan Press, 208 pp, £25 (hardcover), £8.95 (paperback). Argues against the common view of socialism as being private companies replaced by state enterprises and holds that there are no socialist countries today. Socialism means a marketless, moneyless, wageless, classless, stateless world society. M. Rubel and J. Crump writes about this vision of socialism in the nineteenth and twentieth century respectively, and the book also contains articles on the various currents representing non-market socialism: Anarcho-Communism (A. Pengam), Impossibilism (S. Coleman), Council Communism (M. Shipway), Bordigism (A. Buick) and Situationism (M. Shipway).

Come and wet this truncheon by D. Douglass (DAM-IWA:PO Box 96, Doncaster NUM Branch Delegate, Hatfield Main Branch, Doncaster. This pamphlet is about the role of the police in the miners strike of 1984-85 and deals with "the way in which the police operation confronted us as ordinary working people, the things that shook us and the changes we have gone through as individuals and as a community". The author hopes that the faith in the guardians of law and order may be shaken by the account given in this pamphlet. Price 80p, a quarter of which will be donated to victimised miners.

Wildcat (Box W, 180 Mansfield Rd., Nottingham, or Box W, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 2BU) Issue 10 - Editorial - Class struggle since the mine strike - Support the Labour Party, the working class will lose - Lesbians and gays in the class war - US imperialism - Human community against democracy - From the Falklands war to the class war - Leaflet from French student demonstrations Dec. 86 - Technology, capital and war - South Africa analysis: Reply to our critics - Iran-Iraq: Class war against imperialism - Poland 1981: Graveyard of workers' democracy (review of H. Simon) - Poland 1980-82 - Class Struggle and the Crisis of Capital - Review of A. Buick/J. Crump: The Wages System Under New Management.

Syndicalism in Practice A series of supplements to "Rebel Worker" on the history of anarchist/anarchosyndicalist organisations and movements. Available from ASP Publishers & Distributors, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX and PO Box 96, Doncaster DN4 0QU. No. 1 Spain: the CNT. No. 2 Argentina: the FORA. No. 3 Chile: the IWW & FORC. No. 4: Poland 1919-45.

Counter Information (Box 81, c/o 43 Candlemakers Row, Edinburgh) April-May 87 & Supplement Job Training Scheme - Caterpillar strike - Abortion - Strikes/demonstration/riots in Greece, Barzil, Venezuela, Yugoslavia - Spain grinds to a halt - Worldwide anti-apartheid actions - Italy: struggle against nuclear military complex - Wapping - Claimants actions - Letter on prisons, and more. July/August 87 Claimants take over town halls - German anti-census actions - South Africa - Action against racism - Workers struggles in Spain - Claimants actions (Britain) - Ardrbride strike and pickets against the firm in Britain and abroad - H.F.W. Plastics dispute (Gateshead) - Blakes' Engineering strike (Leith), and more.

Solidarity (A Journal of Libertarian Socialism - c/o 123 Lathom Road, London E6) Issue 14/Summer 1987 Main theme mutineers in British army in WWI, criticising BBC TV drama "The Monocled Mutineer" for distorting revolutionary history and downplaying working class ability for autonomous action, reflecting the interests of the leftist media professionals. - C. Castoriadis letter on Soviet Union. - Debate on the Class War group. - Book reviews: The Front Line (Nickie Roberts) - Sleeping with Soldiers (R. Daniell) - What a Man's Gotta Do (A. Easthope) - Wildcat pamphlet "Class War on the Home Front". Issue 15/Autumn 1987 Main theme Hungary 1956 rebellion, including lengthy interview with Ken Weller on the effects the rebellion had on the British left. - Book reviews: Hungarian Tragedy (P. Fryer) - Hungary '56 (A. Anderson) - Always Coming Home (U. Le Guin).

Communist Bulletin (Communist Bulletin Group. Box CBG, Boomtown Books, 167 King Street, Aberdeen) No. 12/Summer 1987 No change in the bosses lineup (general election) - Election demonstrates divisions within working class - Barbie - just another capitalist humanitarian - Attack on working class housing and benefits - What is Gorbachov up to - British revolutionaries of the 1930s - Review of L.L. Men: Two texts for defining the communist programme.

Internationalist Perspective (External Fraction of the International Communist Current. I.P. is published: in English, USA. - PO BOX 1748, Montclair, New Jersey 07043; UK - BM BOX 8454, London WC1N 3XX; in French, Belgium - DESTRIKER, BP 1181, Centre MONNAIE, 1000 Bruxelles) No. 5/Winter 87 - Railroad men in France show the way to self-organisation - Selforganisation and extension - Resolution on class struggle - Revolutionary intervention in the Belgian strikes - Imperialist stakes in the Middle East - Revolutionary milieu: Letter to Argentina and to "Kamunist Kranti" (India) - Centrism and the ICC - "Fraternal" debate according to the ICC. No. 6/Spring 87 - Workers struggles internationally - French railworkers strike - The ICC and the student movement - Class struggle in USA: The lessons of Hormel - Economy: Plunging into the crisis - Paris meeting: debate on revolutionary intervention - How to define the working class terrain - The process of the development of class consciousness. No. 7/Summer 87 - Spain, Yugoslavia, workers struggle against left-wing austerity - Belgium: how rank & file unionists sold out the miners - Reforms in eastern bloc means austerity - The continuity of stalinism - GB after the elections - State capitalism discussion - On 'Groupe Communiste Internationaliste' - On the regroupment proposal by 'Communisme ou Civilisation', 'Germano', 'Revue Communiste' and 'Jalons'.

18 FRANCE

CASH - The paper for unwaged and ancillary workers- ACP -53 Avenue des Gobelins - 75011 Paris (in french)

n° 7 July 1987 -Manifest for the guarantee of a minimum benefit for everybody-Looking for new strategies for the unemployed movement

COURANT ALTERNATIF-O C L /Egore-BP 1213 Reims Cedex (in french)

n° 66- May 1987 -Arab hunt à La Croix Rousse -Health Service : the institutionalised inequality -Railways; Longwy, Metz, some reflections after the strike ;what could be done after the strike ? (discussion around the manipulating of the coordination committees)-Senegal ; crisis of a regime and revolutionary perspectives ,

n° 67 -June 1987 -Demonstration against nuclear in Paris on the 20 June -Recognised moonlighting -Teachers ;balance of a struggle -Kanaky ; where is the fight going ?-SNCF;repression against the strikers- After the strike , the union question ,

Contre - published by Octobre -BP 781 - 75124 Paris Cedex 03 (in french)

n° 0 - février 1987- In the editorial some explanations are given : "We claim that the theory is an absolute necessity when it is ... a concrete analysis...i.e when it aims at being an instrument for class struggle .This aim is to produce... a proletarian knowledge which will allow the rising up of revolutionary forcesEvery revolutionary writing has to perform a constant confrontation between practice and social reality...We have to catch the subjective potentialities...a revolutionary consensus we have to structure and concretise together....a process to recompose the revolutionary movement." All that expresses a lot of ambiguities we can find as well in the last sentence of this text when it is question of "the buds of the contestation which WE will transform in flowers of the spring revolt " .Other articles of this issue : Railways strike (SNCF)

n°1- summer 1987- talk about a "renewal of the social conflict " and on the "recomposition of an autonomous and organised pole " - When the town is asleep - Who is afraid of the big bad wolf ?-Manoeuvres against the Basques -Growing banalisation of a militarisation of life.

National Committee of coordination between railwaymen (in french)

N°2 -April- May 1987 - "To maintain the solidarity and coordination of the rank and file,For the union unity and the democratic organisation of our struggles in committee of strike elected by general assemblies of workers".This committee and the paper are the continuation of the national coordinating committee built during the strike around the drivers of Paris-Nord - This issue deals with the preparation of a rank and file meeting on the 23d of May-It gives a report of the building up of the national coordinating committee during the strike -The new plans of the SNCF; where are we going ?

C'est possible (see page 4 in this issue)

n° 01 -The rank and file meeting of the 23d of May- Solidarity between railwayworkers and customers -The strike of the teachers ; the coordinating committee ,

Os Cangaceiros - publication in french published irregularly available at "Les jardins de Provence, 3 rue Dancourt,75018 ,Paris .(3 issues already published) n°2 -November 1986 - texts on Great Britain (Brick keep Britain beautiful), on Spain (Homage to Asturias , Gijon 84-85) The assembly is our main weapon (the rioters of Forjas Alavesas -spring 1976) - Revolt in the prisons (Prisoner's talkin'blues)

n° 3 - Editorial notes (How is it possible to think freely in the shade of the University? Notes from a collective debate)- On the railways strike - The spanish hour -The industrial domestication -on the riots in Great Britain - several articles on South Africa

Réseau d'Echanges et de Mouvement -provisional address- Sophie Bellone - 12 Parc de la Risle - 76130 Mont Saint Aignan - (in french)

It is not an extension of Echanges et Mouvement; none of us is involved in this call ,we have only known it when it arrived in our mail. We can agree with such an initiative but we can observe that the same name could cause some confusion about the mail or contacts .

This call is for :

- the publishing of a bulletin

- regular meetings

- a postal address

It is proposed to start the discussion at two levels :

1)It is considered that the winter 86-87 means a break and opens a new period; we have to catch this opportunity .

2) The time has come to try to build a place for 'Exchanges and Movement' between proletarians; we have thought of it for a long time; could be a provisional one .

U K

Council Communist Movement

We mentioned in the previous Echanges issues the attempt to build in Great Britain a new organisation of council communists. We gave the reference of some publications and texts issued for this purpose and the addresses where they were available .Some of you certainly received last summer an invitation to come to a conference on the 12th of september in London. This ' First Conference of Council Communists in Britain ' was summoned pompously by an 'Institute for the practice and theory of the proletarian revolution ' -' Communist forum of revolutionary praxis (Preparatory Committee)' ; the convocation was preceded by a long theoretical text and foresaw a large programme of speeches and of discussions to take place for a whole week end.The whole thing ended with 7 signatures , among them the signature of an active member of Echanges in Britain (H.Simon).This one having been abroad for two months was the first surprised with the use of his name in a text he disagreed with and to see he has to deliver a speech on the 'autonomous workers'movement' in France .In another issue we will give a more extended report of this meeting and of our criticism about the text mentioned above.

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